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Clark's Change of Jobs

*Move Seems to Show He Is More Valuable
As Troubleshooter Than Security Adviser*

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 14 — By naming William P. Clark as Secretary of the Interior, President Reagan has seemed to underscore that Mr. Clark was dispensable as the White House's national security adviser, but is indispensable to him as a political troubleshooter.

Twenty-four hours after the surprise announcement that Mr. Clark was being named to replace James G. Watt, the prevailing opinion in Washington appeared to be that the President had made this decision for reasons having little to do with foreign policy and much to do with Mr. Clark. The former national security adviser was reported to have wanted to be relieved of duty in the White House Situation Room, where his grasp of the intricacies of foreign policy was weak. And his personal chemistry with Mr. Reagan made it attractive for the President to choose him as Mr. Watt's replacement.

Nevertheless, the way the switch was managed by Mr. Reagan has raised some foreign-policy questions that neither White House nor State Department officials were able to answer today. They had all been caught by surprise by Mr. Reagan's decision to remove his longtime aide as head of the National Security Council staff and make him the administrator of the nation's natural resources.

The questions being asked most urgently were: Why did the President move so precipitously to name Mr. Clark as Interior Secretary without at the same time settling on his replacement? And why had the President not consulted with Secretary of State George P. Shultz, to see if Mr. Clark's

sudden departure would cause any harm?

"Mr. Shultz, his aides said, learned of the President's decision only after it was made. Was Mr. Shultz not consulted because the President was not inclined to take him into his confidence? Or was it because the President knew from past conversations that Mr. Shultz would welcome such a move?

There were growing signs in conversations with State Department officials today that it may well have been the latter — the knowledge that Mr. Shultz would be pleased by Mr. Clark's departure from the national security post.

Mr. Shultz's aides had complained that Mr. Clark was increasingly intruding into Mr. Shultz's areas of responsibility, was making decisions without clearing them with the Secretary of State and was using his proximity and friendship with the President to overturn some of Mr. Shultz's recommendations.

'Even More Strained'

"Even though George did his best to avoid going public," a friend of Mr. Shultz said, "I would say that his relations with Clark were even more strained than Vance's with Brzezinski's." He was referring to the often publicized disagreements between President Carter's Secretary of State, Cyrus R. Vance, and his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

What stands out in conversations with officials who deal in the foreign policy and military fields is their lack of regret at Mr. Clark's departure. He was viewed as a neophyte when he entered the State Department in 1981 as Alexander M. Haig Jr.'s Deputy Secretary, and he never succeeded in dispelling that impression among foreign-affairs professionals, even after nearly two years as national security adviser.

"Can you imagine the uproar if Jerry Ford had asked Henry Kissinger to become Secretary of Commerce, or if Carter had shifted Brzezinski to the Labor Department?" a State Department official said today. "It's not unthinkable for Clark to go to Interior because he does not create a foreign-

policy vacuum."

As for the delay in selecting a replacement for Mr. Clark, there were some signs today that the choice was proving more difficult than some Administration officials first anticipated.

If Mr. McFarlane is selected — and White House aides said he remained the leading candidate — it will still leave the Administration with the problem of having to name another special Middle East envoy at a particularly delicate time in that region.

Mr. McFarlane is primarily regarded as a skilled staff officer, a team player with no political base of his own. That makes him attractive to some State Department officials whose vision of the "perfect" national security adviser was Brent Scowcroft, who held that job in the Ford Administration and who worked easily with Henry A. Kissinger, who gave up the security adviser post under President Ford but continued to serve as Secretary of State.

Conservatives Lost 'Their Man'

But what makes Mr. McFarlane acceptable to Mr. Shultz — even though they have had their share of differences over Middle East policy — is what makes him less attractive to some of Mr. Reagan's more conservative supporters, who viewed Mr. Clark as "their man" in the White House.

Most State Department officials agree that Mr. Clark was "hard line" in some of his attitudes, but was not as rigid as some of his supporters thought he was. It is assumed by some State Department officials that Mr. Reagan is considering naming Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, who also has conservative support, to replace Mr. Clark.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick is said by some officials to have resented being passed over when Mr. Clark replaced Richard V. Allen in 1982; she has not been particularly happy at the United Nations, where she is the chief American delegate, and she seems to have a good relationship with Mr. Reagan.

Shultz Meets With Reagan

State Department aides said Mr. Shultz met with Mr. Reagan at lunch today to discuss his views on who should hold the national security adviser post, and they speculated that he was urging that either Mr. Scowcroft, already involved in this administration as a special arms-control adviser, or Mr. McFarlane, be given the post.

But both Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and the Director of Central Intelligence, William J. Casey, are said to be closer ideologically to Mrs. Kirkpatrick than to Mr. McFarlane.

Whatever the President's decision, it will have to be made soon, because otherwise the interagency coordination of foreign and military policy suffers and the impression is created at home and abroad of an Administration with a damaged rudder.